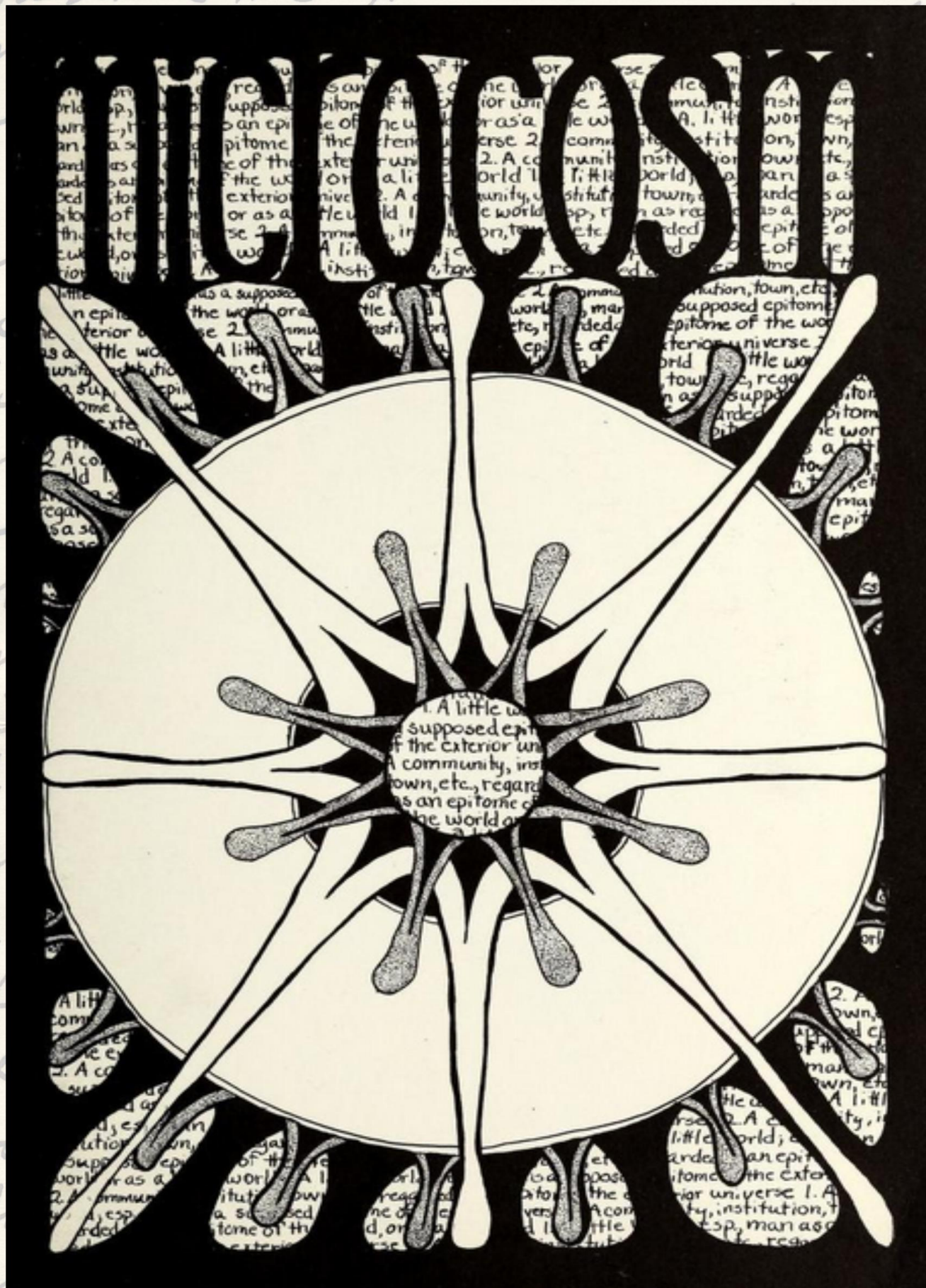




Celebrating 50 Years
1973 - 2023

Microcosm

Spring 2023

The cover art features the original design from 1973, which was created by former Co-Lin student Jann Tullos Kenney.

Microcosm is a publication of Copiah-Lincoln Community College's chapter of Sigma Kappa Delta.

Members:

Front Row:

Lynsey Cooper; Jaycee Case; Whitney Howell – Treasurer; Akura Brown – Secretary; Ty'China Byrd – President; Isaac Sivils – Vice-President; Madeline King – Historian; Journee Jackson

Back Row:

Cole Givens; Zakarria Hill; Kairi Milton; Abeni Fuller; Hannah Givens

Not Pictured: Toney Bussey, Jordan Clanton, Shelby Courtney, Gracie Guynes, Henry Jackson, Destiny Johnson, Kathryn Johnson, Makenzie Moore, Caleb Myers, Christalyn Penn, Cassandra Phillips, Hayden

Spring



Table of Contents

“3:46”	Kennedy E	4
“Bruises”	Kennedy E	6
“From the Sea”	Kelly Eubanks	6
“Older Than Me”	Kelly Eubanks	8
“Within a Dream”	Kelly Eubanks	9
“Inside Faces”	Zory	10
“Black Moon”	Zory	10
“Mind”	Zory	12
“Sky”	Zory	12
“Donny Knows”	Lily Lofton	14-15
“Throughout the Day”	Kennedy E	17
“Today She Died”	Kelly Eubanks	18
“A War of Hearts”	Laney Beard	19-20
“A Week from Sunday”	Kelly Eubanks	23-27

3:46

Kennedy E

I hear wind rustling the bushes outside my window
I see headlights shine onto my walls
I feel the cold sheets beneath me
I smell lavender air freshener
I taste blood on my tongue

I hear the water dripping outside
I see the clock reading 3:46
I feel my hands trembling
I smell coconut body wash
I taste mint toothpaste

I try to slow my breathing.

Breathe in:

1
2
3
4
5

Hold:

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8

Exhale:

5
4
2
1

Wait. I skipped three.

Do I recount?

God I'm such an idiot.

Stupid-

Fat-

Useless-

Ugly-

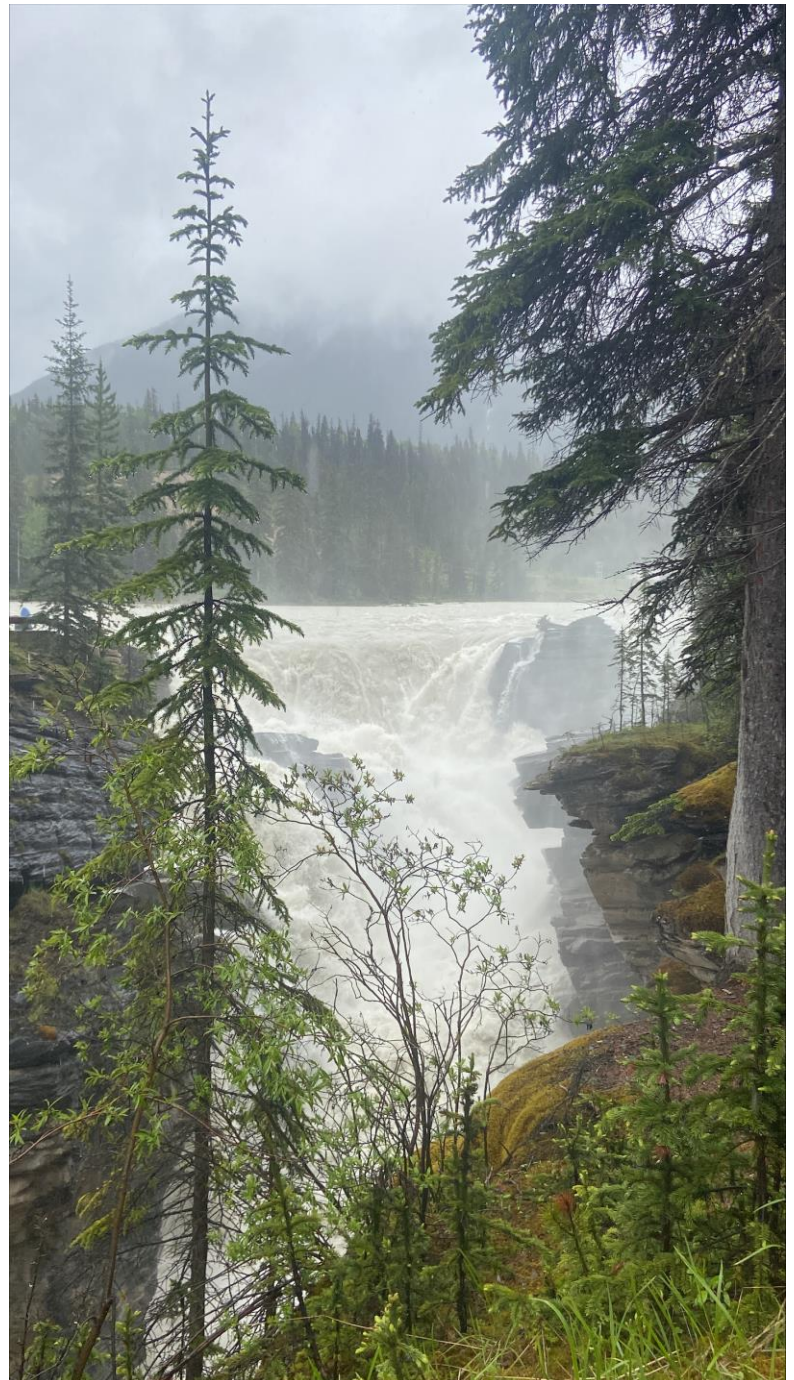
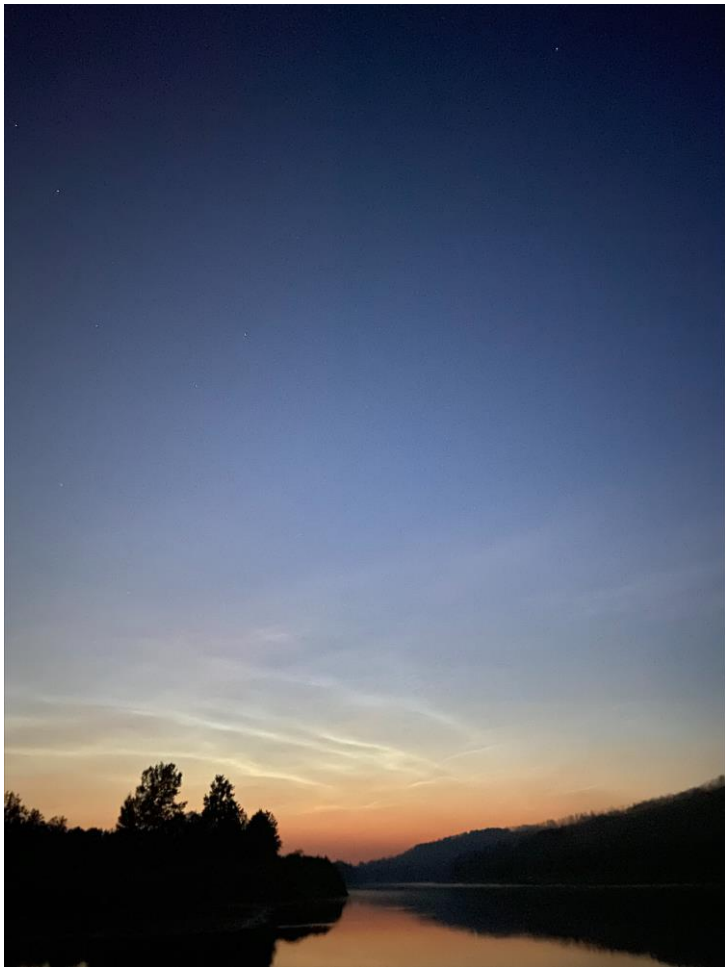
Failure-

STOP

WHAT CAN YOU SENSE

I hear...

-3:46



Photography by Isaac Sivils

Bruises

Kennedy E

The marks have faded
And your hand print is gone
no longer burned on my body like a branding
Yet I can still sense it

Sometimes little things remind me of it
I hear keys jingling in a door
Or a knock on my door frame
And for a split second
I'm in the room again
With your hand up my shirt
the other over my mouth
And I forget to breathe
But it only lasts a second
Because according to you
It never happened
I just wish I could forget

- the bruises are burned into me

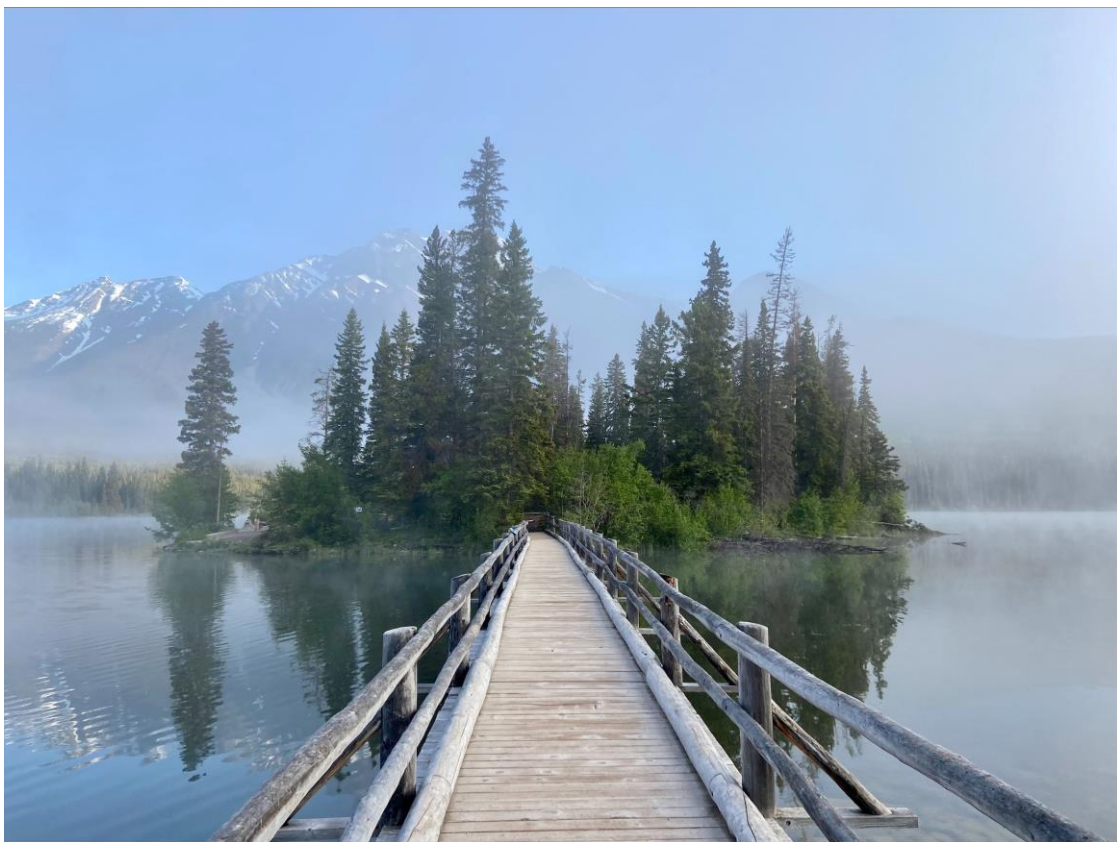
From the Sea - Kelly Eubanks

Now she calls to me from across the sea
Her voice resounds a sharp and glassy tone
Her song does paint a somber melody
To me she sings of what is yet unknown

The sky cries out to her with heavy heart
It's tears clawing at the ship's mighty sails
The waves reach out, tearing the hull apart
She cradles me with in her inky veils

I wake beneath the now still waters
And there she appears a hair's breadth away
A vision she is, the sea's own daughter
Through me she glides with both shock and dismay

So for now we shall see our hand in hand
As we lay together in sun warmed sands



Photography by Isaac Sivils

Older Than Me Kelly Eubanks

She's older than me.
And I think that's why we split.
I look at her, at her eyes,
And they hold years.
Years more than I have lived.
Years more than they should.
She is so much older than me it hurts.
To hear her speak,
To watch her act,
She lives at a different pace than me.
I think we all do.
I think all of our paces are different,
Like cars on a highway.
All separate.
All individual
And yet.
All meeting the same destination.
I think
By the time I'm as old as she is.
It will have already been too late.
She is older than me,
And that's why I'll never understand her.
Because she is so much older than me.



Photography by Kelly Eubanks

Within a Dream

Kelly Eubanks

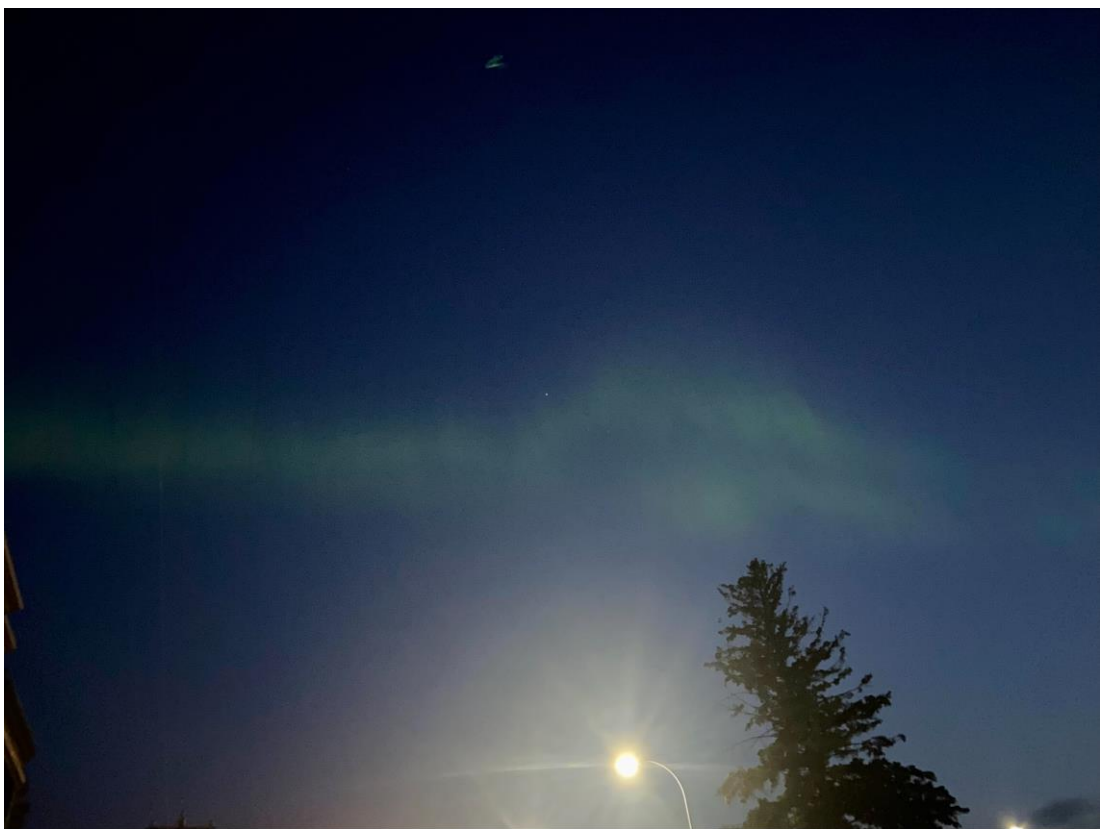
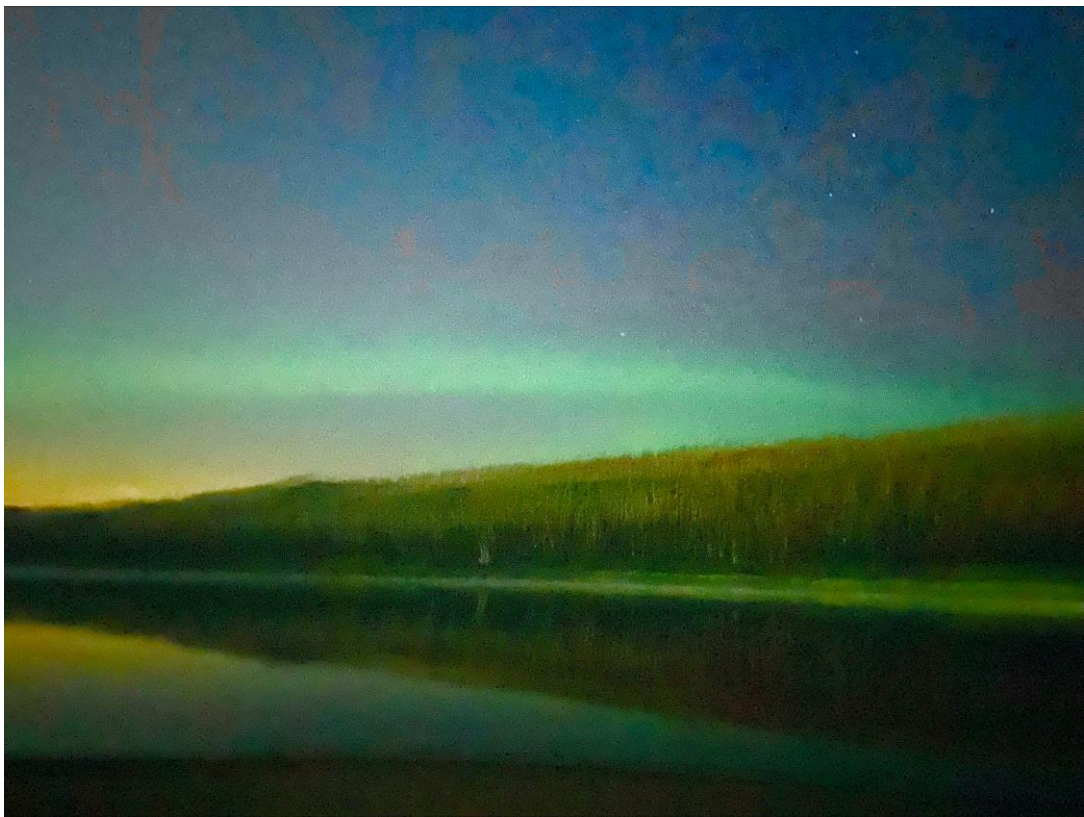
They came to me in a dream.
They being the most literal term I can give.
They were a collection of memories,
of lives,
of experiences that in numbers so vast.
possibilities so endless.
I understand them as much as I remember my own birth.
my own death.
that is to say not at all.
They offered me a choice,
to start a new.
From all that is,
from all that was,
from all that will be.
They gave me a choice,
one that let me exceed the boundaries of the mind,
The limits of life and the limits of death.
One that surpassed time and space,
that separated the layers of who I am,
and who I was to become.
They came to me in a dream and they gave me a choice.
A choice I cannot remember choosing.



Photography by Kelly Eubanks

*Our faces to the outside world may be beautiful for a time
But in our deeds and our actions
A new face comes to light
The true face of man is sewn onto our head
Permanently for all to see so that they may instead avoid the monster within*

*The black moon of passion and envy
Embraces the world in an eclipse
A shocking dissonance
Time stops forever
Mahogany trees in a standstill
In the mystifying October dusk
Amethyst light shines across the enveloped sky
Addicted to this night am I*



Photography by Isaac Sivils

I wish my mind would cease.
("Inadequate")
So that I could sleep,
("You're a failure")
So I could rest,
("I don't want to")
So that I wouldn't dream,
("I can't")
Of false and dangerous things.
("I'm tired")
Awake or in sleep,
("I want to quit")
My mind continues to speak.
("They don't love me")
Who gave it a voice?
("It hurts")
Who told it my secrets?
("Why")
Who taught it to lie?
("Go away")
It betrays me.
("It's not possible")
Why?

If I were to fall upside down, would I drown in its waves
The seemingly infinite vastness
The changing hues of unending beauty
Light recesses when angels hide
Where birds fly, the sky



Artwork by Destiny Johnson

Donny knows where he is,
He knows how he got here,
And he even knows where he'll go.
Donny is the spunky primate, the cause of the circus' long queues.
He balances on a ball,
He jumps through hoops,
He even plays the piano while the curtain comes down.
Donny knows where he is,
He is in front of hundreds of people,
surrounded by balloons,
Holding contact with every eye in the room.
Donny knows how he got here,
A cold cage and sweet treats,
Long nights and dark streets.
This is all he'll ever known,
The bare arms of a trainer over the hairy ones of his mother,
Climbing only when told, never for his own.
Donny was born to perform,
The apex of comedy,
A puppet's primal form.
"Jump Higher!"
"Smile Wider!"
"Hold Still!"
Donny always does as is he told when the trainer bribes him with treats,
because he knows the last resort isn't as sweet.
A stick with a nail,
A leather whip,
Or sometimes, nothing at all.
They walk away from his cage,
No water,
No food,
Only a pile of hay that smelled like a chimpanzee he'll never know.
Donny knows where he will go,
If he ever misbehaves,
If his tickets stop selling,
Donny will be cast out, sold to the highest bidder.
Whether he became too old,
Too mean,
Or, worst of all, too boring.
Donny can feel it,
Every time the joke doesn't land.
Every night that the applause ends sooner.
Every time the ringleader moves on faster.

Donny knows his purpose,
To entertain,
To sell.
Donny knows his uptake is serious,
Special foods,
Special cages,
Special costumes,
He is watched constantly, even after the stage lights dim.
Donny knew he was getting older,
He is already nine, that's two years older than the last Donny.
He knows what they are looking for,
They are waiting to see his anger,
For him to lash out as his keeper.
It's getting harder,
He thinks of biting into flesh,
with every crack of the whip.
Donny is no longer easy to handle,
The clowns are scared to pet him,
The elephants want to trample him.
Donny knows where he'll go.
For the last five chimps, scientists won the adoption bidding.
They will cut him open,
Splay out his skin,
Infect him with diseases he won't understand.
But Donny is already infected,
He has a degenerative disease
He lost skills that he knew when he was younger,
He lost all fear in predators,
Other than a featherless bipedal.
Donny knows he was infected when the first person touched him.
They petted him and fed him,
Kissed him and loved him,
Made him feel like a son to the homosapiens.
But now that he is the most like a chimpanzee he has ever been,
Something they always claimed to love,
They will throw him out,
Like there were never posters of him,
Like no child has ever fed him,
Like no one ever loved him.
He knows the time is ticking,
Donny knows all his tricks,
Every jump,
Every flip.
But Donny doesn't know when his fame will be eclipsed.



The smell of freshly fallen rain enveloped the girl as she stepped onto the damp roof.

Before her remained a breathtaking sight, the sunrise; she had seen it millions of times although it never failed to astound her. The sun hid behind the horizon before making its magnificent and captivating entrance. Golden rays of hope broke through the grim, gray clouds, scattering them and shining light upon the trees and land. The bold and glorious sight erased every sign that night had ever resided. Warm hues mixed within each other, painting a picture only mother nature could paint.

Nature's enthralling and extraordinary beauty will forever leave the world in awe.

The blank, white paper rustled as the pencil began to move, trying its best to capture at least a fraction of the beauty before it. Vast miles of land became active with life as the meadow awoke. Deer munched on the wheat field while the birds sang, awaking their neighbors to the new day. Trees swished loudly, dancing with the wind, along with the constant tap, tap, tap, of the water dripping from the rusted gutters. The parchment turned into a mess of smudged lead and disorganized sketch marks, and slowly a scene started to emerge within its chaos; every tree and every cloud, beautifully portrayed. Blue jays and cardinals singing in the trees, along with the fawns trotting in the pasture, their mothers not far behind. The landscape seemed calm and idyllic.

Barking manically, the young black labs chased squirrels across the landscape, as they did most days. The girl's hands, covered in smeared lead, held up her drawing to better light to admire her sketch, occasionally erasing or adding a line. The calming sounds of creek waves echoed, splashing and crashing onto whatever remained in its path. The sounds remained those of nature and nocturnal animals finding their way back to their homes till the sun retreats behind the horizon and the night comes again. Although the girl retreated through her window, the day continued. Creek water continued to flow along with the push and pull of the wind throughout the day.

Clouds shifted throughout the sky and the sun, once again, touched the horizon. The birds stopped singing, and the deer left the meadow. Nocturnal animals awoke and traveled out of their homes, night once again returning. A warm hue of colors flooded the land as the sun kissed the world goodnight. Shining brightly, the full moon came into view with all its stars not far behind. Still, one could hear the water flowing in the creek and creatures roaming through the woods. The owls began to hoot, the coyotes yipped, and the world continued until the day came again.

Today She Died Kelly Eubanks

Today was the day she died. She didn't fear death, nor was she worried, they would all die, either now or later. But today she felt it, deep in her bones. Today she would die. Yet, she still wasn't worried. She continued on with her day, wished her loved ones well and waited. And while she waited she thought.

She thought of all she did, of all she didn't. She thought of her firsts, she thought of her lasts. Of times of joy and times of sorrow. She thought of all she gained and all she lost. She began to wonder. What could she have accomplished? What opportunities did she not take? What will happen next? Who did she help? Who did she hurt? She began to wonder, she began to mourn. Not herself. Not her death. But rather, her endings. All she will never do, all she will never do again. How life will continue on, like she was never there. How little her impact was in it. Then she began to accept.

Accept that all was ending, that she was ending. Accept that her time was up and she was through. But with every ending comes a beginning. Accepting the knowledge that, even if she did have more time, she couldn't say more would be accomplished, that a bigger impact would be made. And with that she waited.



Photography by Kelly Eubanks

There is something unnatural about a battlefield after the fighting has finally come to a halt. The silence was perhaps what burdened her most. Where life once sang its praises, now only death's sinister tune remained. It was so quiet it was haunting. As if the gods above no longer watched over the land, deserting it after its unholy desecration.

She felt the absence of it all. The vile feeling of life stripped bare, of the earth dying beneath her feet. She felt it wailing, screaming in agony, begging for someone to release its bonds of suffering. But what was there to do in war?

She hated how little it affected her now, the site of so much pain and suffering. The corpses were long since hauled away, being laid to rest according to whatever customs each side saw fit. But it was hard not to look around at the barren field, where the grass was either trampled to nothing, dead altogether, or stained a dark reddish brown.

So many souls laid to rest, taken from their mortal bodies in the violent cacophony of conflict. So many families left in shambles. So many friends lost and lovers gone.

Yet, standing above it all, looking out into the deafening silence, she felt so vacant. No grief swept over her, not after the first dozen battles. Not after the loss of her family. Not after he was taken from her. No, she felt nothing now. Just that deep seeping feeling of dread, of the next battle to come. Where had all the beauty gone? Where were the emerald fields, draping willow trees, and lively villages that she remembered? Where were the crystal-clear lakes and fields of lavender? Where were the people? Where had the life gone?

Who let such a disaster happen, and continue to unfold?

She did, she realized. She fought in the name of her people, those that mattered--long dead before her--sword swinging again and again as she continued to lose herself bit by bit.

Where had her happiness gone? When had she let it slip so far away? Would it have meant something had she stood up to her king, declared herself independent with no part in this vile war? Would it have meant something if she had never convinced him to love her? Would he still be alive somewhere, crushing herbs and caring for those in need?

She still remembered his smile, beautiful and unfaltering. It was so full of innocence. As if he still saw a path to peace in the world around him. As if he still had hope for the future. His smile was trust incarnate, a tender loving smile that swaddled one's heart and cared for it like a mother. His laugh had been a carefree melody, soothing even one's harshest moods. But there was always something fierce about him. In his steadfast stance against violence. In his journey to help and mend the world, to pick up the shattered pieces left by those in power.

A War of Hearts (con't)

She should never have fallen in love with him. Should never have let that innocent boy fall in love with her either because he never would have followed her into battle otherwise. He never would have set up a tent outside of that raging battlefield, caring for the wounded with a harsh line set on his lips. He never would have lost his gentle spark, faded by the reality of war. He never would have gotten ill, and he never would have died in her arms. If only she had left him alone. He might still be mending the wounded of his village, concocting cures for the ill, and keeping the spirits up of those who needed it.

She still remembered how he smiled at her. As pale and sickly as he was, he smiled at her to lift her spirits.

“End this war,” he had said. As if such a thing were so simple, but the words on his lips did seem so simple. He made her feel like she could accomplish such an enormous feat.

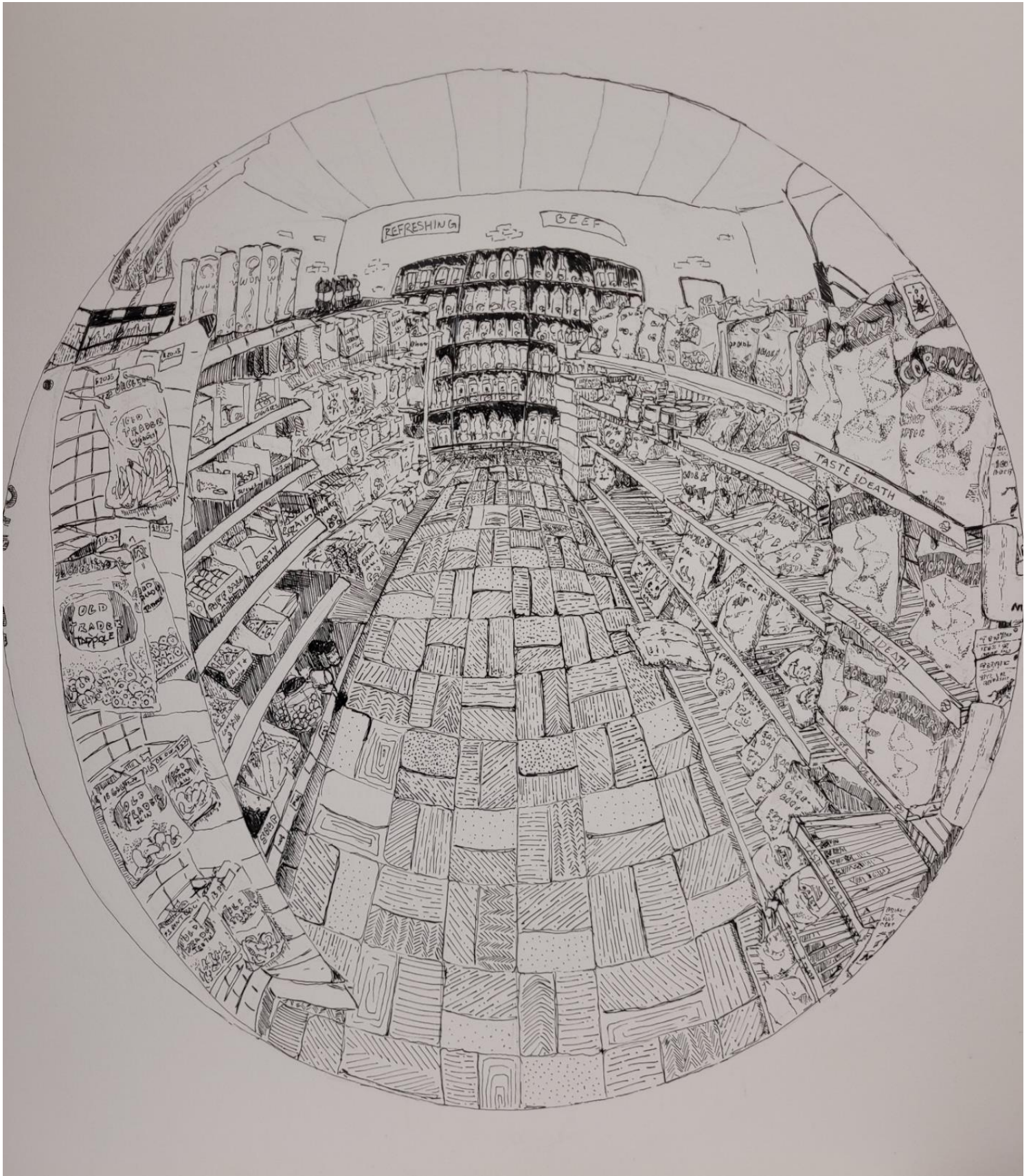
He made her feel strong, powerful. As if no obstacle were too large, but without him next to her everything seemed so much harsher. So bleak and empty. So overwhelming.

But she could not stand idly by and do nothing. Not when he had died for something. He had to have died for something. She would not let his suffering be for nothing. Not his nor anyone else who had fallen victim to this war.

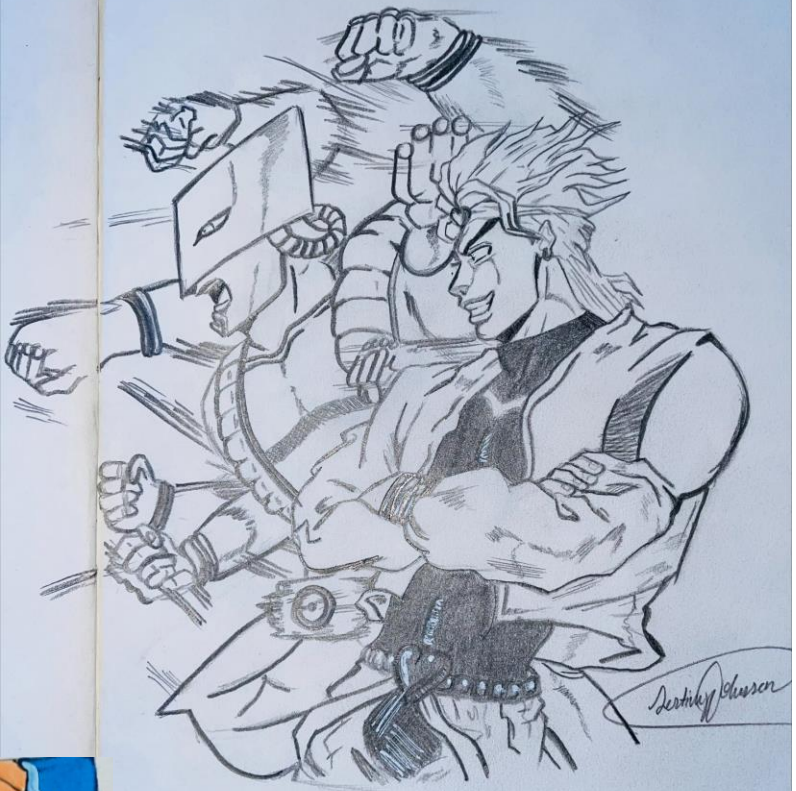
She would step forward, into the world and into herself. She would hide no longer under the calming blanket of ignorance.

She stepped onto the ruined battlefield, crying out with all of the conviction left within her heart, and the heavens above heard her call. The sky rumbled, and lightning cracked across the horizon.

She was made of rage, at the things done to her and the world around her, and the earth met her anger and grief with its own mighty fury.



Artwork by Kelly Eubanks



Artwork by Destiny Johnson

A Week from Sunday Kelly Eubanks

The power went out Sunday night. At least that's what Beaux said. I didn't hear anything, but Beaux said I slept like the dead so of course I hadn't heard anything. I saw the hurricane though; clumps of wet leaves and tree limbs covered the ground, the air cool from the rain. Our neighbor Mr. John came over at lunch. I think it was lunch. It was when the sun was high, and Momma was frying spam on the stove. A red BIC lighter perched just out of reach of the flames licking at the cast-iron. Daddy went out to meet 'm voices clear as bell traveling through the hurricane dogtrot.

He said a tree'd fallen on the line just past his house, and that the culvert on the backroads behind our's had washed out again. He asked Daddy about the generator under the shed, said the gas station on old 84 still had some gas as of yesterday. I don't know when he left but by the time Momma called us to the table Daddy was alone. We didn't talk much then, Daisy Mae curling under Beaux's chair, I slid down my seat, craning to rub Daisy Mae's head with my foot, wiggling away when she sniffed at my toes. Daddy an' Momma spoke in half truths about the Hurricane.

Daddy went to get gas when the sun was still high. Telling us to help Momma clean up the kitchen. Me and Beaux begged him to let us come but he wouldn't budge. Him and Momma shared a look, I don't know what it meant but Beaux stopped asking to go when he saw it, whistling for Daisy Mae to leave her perch in the truck bed. Momma went back inside, Beaux had to fetch him the red gas cans from beside the shed. Hollow clanks followed him as he trudged through the sea of green and brown, Daisy Mae followed like a shadow behind him. The truck started with a bang and a puff of exhaust. I watched 'm till the truck disappeared behind dust and distance. Beaux wasn't there when I turned back to the house.

We were on the porch when Daddy returned. Daisy Mae didn't run at the truck as it pulled in like she normally would've, she just stood behind Beaux and waited tail hoovering between her legs. Leaning over the tailgate to unhook the gas cans, Daddy smiled when he looked over at me and Beaux. It didn't reach his eyes. His lips bleed as the gesture pulled at the dry cracks in the skin. When did his teeth get so yellow? It was as if he shoved chunks of Momma's cornbread into the gaps of his pale gums. He pushed a wad of Red-Man into his mouth, dusty fingers coated in a layer of tabaco and red spit. He didn't stop smiling at us. He pushed past us, rubbing my head, and telling Beaux to flip the breaker.

A Week from Sunday (con't)

He smelled like rot. Like when we passed by roadkill on the way back from church, flesh steaming under the Mississippi sun. Momma didn't say anything about the smell. She didn't ask why Daddy hadn't started up the generator. She didn't ask anything, just flitted around the kitchen doing chores that didn't exist. Beaux asked if we could go down to the creek, face pinched as the smell burned our noses. When Momma heard him speak, she jumped, but after a moment she agreed to let us go. She looked so, scared? Her skin was pale and hair sticking to her forehead with sweat. Was the sweat from the heat, or, from Daddy? Daddy just kept smiling at us. Daisy Mae waited for us outside, refusing to enter the house.

Momma didn't come out of her room much once Daddy got back. No matter how hot it was she would just lay underneath the sheets and stare at the ceiling fan. Daddy said we should let her rest. That the summer heat was making her feel sick, Daisy Mae whined at her from the doorway. I wanted to see Momma, but Daddy said she wanted to rest. Sometimes when I knew Daddy was outside I would sneak in to read to Momma, she never reacted but I knew she appreciated the company. Eventually Daddy noticed and started locking the door when he left the room. I could catch of Momma from the doorway as he shut it, she was always in the same spot, never moving, never blinking. The smell of rot was deeper now. Pungent as it sat in the stale air. The generator still wasn't on.

Daisy Mae wasn't there when we woke up. Daddy said she would turn up, turning back to rifle through a pile of mail by the door. Beaux and I went out looking for her before the birds had stopped singing. Passing by the truck and its red gas cans as we walked through the pasture; buzzards circled over us in the sky. The sun was high when we reached the creek. Trees sheltering us from the worst of the heat. The creek water had a pink tint as it bubbled over its stone bed. Beaux stopped walking, going rigid, I couldn't get two steps farther before I saw it, her. Daisy Mae was in the water, ribbons of red curling around her. She looked so calm then, fur fluttering in the soft current. Beaux didn't cry then; he didn't do much of anything. He didn't say much of anything as he took her body from the water, eyes in a blank stare. She was so limp, he pulled her closer to his chest, just like he did when she was a puppy. Beaux buried Daisy Mae underneath the white oak in the back corner of the pasture. That's where her and Beaux used to go when chores were finished. He strung a chain of Forget-me-nots around her neck and kissed her head. All I could do was sob, falling to my knees in front of her grave, hands clutched in a goodbye prayer. The sun had begun to set as we left her.

A Week from Sunday (con't)

Daddy said how sorry he was when we got back, said how much he knew Beaux loved Daisy Mae and that she loved him. Beaux's face contorted into a frown, brows furrowing but he still didn't say anything. Daddy rubbed at Beaux's shoulder, there was a dark color underneath the beds of his nails and in the cracks of his fingers. None of us spoke that night at the dinner table.

Beaux found Daisy Mae's collar underneath tiller in the barn, wet clumps of fur clinging to the now darkened canvas. Daddy didn't say anything about it when Beaux brought it inside, he just stared, mouth twisted into a cruel frown.

I don't know who made the food. All the milk in the fridge had curdled and the eggs were all warm. Plates of cooked meat rotted on the table. Flies dancing from one white blossom to another. We never ate. Me, and Daddy, and Beaux would just sit there. Momma didn't join us; I don't remember the last time Momma ate. I stopped feeling hungry after a while, I think Beaux did too. He sat still as a mouse during meals, looking at Daddy with fisheyes. Sometimes Daddy would eat. Picking up soft pieces of meat from one of the many plates, pushing them between his dry lips, yellow teeth dark with the late sun's light. Dark spit would dribble from his mouth as he eats, a wet crunching as he bit through cartilage. He'd stare at me and Beaux as he ate, long grey tongue licking at the corners of his mouth between bites.

At night I curled further underneath my thin sheets, goose flesh rippling over my skin. I would hear someone walking down the dark halls as the coyotes screamed. I wanted to know why they were screaming, what they feared. I asked Daddy about the footsteps and the coyotes, but he just smiled at me with too many teeth and pet my head. I didn't ask again after that.

I don't remember when he started exactly, but Beaux screamed with the coyotes. The screams had warped into cries, wet and broken things that pulled at something deep in my chest and chilled the pit of my stomach. Beaux didn't talk anymore, at night he would sit out on the back porch and scream, the screams sounded more like coyote's than humans. Deep circles under his sunken in eyes when we'd sit together at the table. Eventually Beaux stopped coming to mealtimes. I don't think Daddy noticed; I don't think he cared.

A Week from Sunday (con't)

Sometimes Daddy would stand in the doorway and watch me at night. He wouldn't move, he wouldn't blink, he would just watch. I would look back at him on those nights, not daring to move. Fists rigid around my sheets. I don't know if he knew I could see him, or if it even mattered if he did. Those nights I would always wake up mid-morning and he'd be gone, I never remembered falling asleep, but I always knew when I was waking up.

Mr. John came over again when the sun was starting to set. He asked me where Momma and Daddy were, I pointed him down the hall and told him that Momma was resting. He came back from her room a few moments later and asked me how long Momma had been resting for. I shrugged and continued to stare at the doorway behind him. The power had come back Thursday night and he wondered if our breaker was on the fritz since our lights were still out. I didn't respond, my eyes looked over to the kitchen table. He grew quiet when he saw the table, he asked where Beaux and Daddy were, but I still didn't answer. All he did was nod; my silence was an answer in and of itself.

The truck was warm, still, and safe with the light smell of feed lingering in the air. The back seat couldn't be reached unless someone opened the front doors first. I was wrapped in bed sheets, head resting against the windows. There was light outside, blue, and red flickers dancing across the seats. I heard voices from outside, but I didn't know what they were saying. From the edge of the window, I watched as blurry people with blurry faces walked around the dark yard. Every once and a while the door would open, and an unfamiliar face would look at me before shutting the door again. I later found out that those faces were the faces of the sheriff and his officers.

Beaux was under the oak tree with Daisy Mae. They had asked me if I knew where he could be. I told them about the creek and the forget-me-nots, about the collar we found and the color under Daddys nails. They never answered my questions about where Beaux was, eyes always refusing to meet mine, words always twisting away from clarity. Sometimes I heard whispers from behind closed doors, that he was found under the oak tree, that he was still missing, that Daddy took him. They never told me what they believed, I believed Beaux was with Daisy Mae under the white oak tree in the pasture, but I wouldn't get to know.

A Week from Sunday (con't)

I don't know what happened to Momma, but I think she is still resting. I never saw her in the rooms of the neighbors' house, or in the waiting room of the doctor. I hope wherever she is she is feeling better. She missed church, I think it was a special occasion because it wasn't on Sunday or Wednesday. People there were sad, they all wanted to tell me they were sorry and that they were praying. No one would tell me what they were apologizing for, why I needed their prayers.

The neighbors house smells like dust and grass. I still think about Momma and Beaux and Daddy, praying for them in my nightly worship. I stay with neighbors now, Mr. John and Mrs. Charline. They have a little white puppy that they called Dusty; he reminds me of Daisy Mae. Most of the time he is quiet like her, but sometimes at night, he'll growl into the darkness and the smell of rot will creep under my window.



Photography by Kelly Eubanks



Copiah-Lincoln Community College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status, or other factors prohibited by law in any of its educational programs, activities, admission, or employment practices.